[For information pertaining to the status and territorial organization of the Greek minority in the Soviet Union, see 21: Kolarz, R1 Soviet Union, category 116, p. 146.]

1:Sanders Z-5,Y (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

[The Island and Seafaring Greeks]

the warm morning sunshine, to watch the sailors of the numerous passenger and cargo ships work aboard ship and then relax in the tiny sea-front cafés, and to talk with the families of those whose most energetic sons are away at sea, is an introduction to a world incomprehensible to many peasants in Central and Northern Greece and strange to the inland American. For me, the best hours of all were those spent along the quay of a busy port with a retired sea captain, telling the tales of his misadventures — a 1950 version of the trials of Odysseus. All of these seafarers, fishermen, and merchant seamen, crews and captains and their island-anchored families, are a part of the rainbow in the rock. Yet they, along with the city Greeks, so similar in vitality but different in their life, make up only half of the people of Greece. The other half are rural. It is with this largest single group that we shall concern ourselves.

The Greek Villager

Being rural in Greece means living in a village, which is usually a picturesque collection of houses, lanes, gardens, orchards, vineyards, and fields. It also means that one is a peasant, since the Greek terms *choriates, chorikos,* derived from the word *choria* (village), are the closest approximations of *peasant* in the Greek language. But any Westerner, in seeking to understand the rural Greek, needs to divest himself of many false notions about the nature of a peasantry, be these on the romantic side of overidealization or on the derogatory plane of considering them mere bearers of burdens and dull plodders through life.[18]

In not all countries do peasants always live in villages, but they do in Greece. Therefore, in examining social life throughout the Greek mainland, away from the cities, we can use *villager, peasant,* and *rural population* interchangeably, feeling that if we understand Greek village life, we also shall have gained a point of comparison for the study of peasantries in other countries.

The importance of the small village in Greek life can best be shown by a few figures taken from the 1951 census. For instance, 44.6 percent — or almost half of the Greek people — lived in 5,473 communes, or local political units, of less than 2,000 inhabitants. At the other extreme was Athens, whose population included 18 percent of the nation's total; by 1961 it had reached 22 percent. Since 1940 there has been a definite drift toward Athens and the twenty other towns which in 1940 had a population of over 20,000. Despite this urban trend, one must still recognize that the small village is an imposing aspect of Greek life which deserves far more attention than it has received in the past.

Although rural people today are increasingly drawn to the city, the peasant in years past has been a man of the land, usually suspicious of city ways. And herein lies a question: are these millions of peasants, following a daily

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

The Plains

Peasants nowadays live in the plains more willingly than they do in the mountains. Good level land has a scarcity value. The most thorough study of this has been made by A. G. Ogilvie, who prepared a map of population density in Greece for the *Geographical Journal* of May–June 1945. He has identified fifty-nine districts which he regards as plains. These usually contain the regional and local capitals and are widely scattered among and around mountains, including in most cases the slopes facing them. They take up about 30 percent of the mainland, but contain about 52 percent of the nonurban population. Thus, one half of the rural population lives upon plains comprising less than one third of the mainland; but this also means that the remaining one half of the rural population lives in a completely mountainous environment.

In Greece the largest plain — that of Trikkala-Karditsa in Thessaly — is less than five hundred square miles in size, not much larger than many American counties. The roll call of the plains, which are alluvial, would list the major provincial towns, whose location is in part an answer to the need for marketing and transportation services of the villagers located in the surrounding fertile agricultural areas. Whether I was traveling in the Peloponnesos, in Epirus, or elsewhere, it was always a stirring sight to climb some range and find spread out on the other side a fruitful valley, along a river or in some old lake basin whose water drained off long ago.

When Greeks think of the plains, however, they think of the kind around Larissa, the chief city of Thessaly, which has rapidly become the center of mechanized agriculture, or they think of the plain of Thessalonike in Macedonia. These are the most important breadbaskets of Greece. Familiarity with these plains means also familiarity with the sun of Greece, which beats down mercilessly in the summertime. Here, a clump of trees or even a single tree is an oasis of shade for a rest after hours of working the sun-baked fields. Where there is not even one tree, the peasants rig up tentlike shelters for use at noonday or take refuge beneath a battered umbrella. During the agricultural season the plains literally teem with people — seldom are they ever out of sight or sound; but they do become more tired and listless as the day wears on. The peasant men in straw hats become tanned to the color of dark leather, as do many of the women in spite of their ce-flowing headkerchiefs. The sun, nevertheless, works wonders with the crops, ripening the grain and bringing sweetness to the magnificent fruits of Greece.

If the plains make one conscious of the sun, they make one even more conscious of water — so much so that a tepid drink from a donkey-borne cask has a refreshing tang to it. On the plains there is usually too much

TABLE 1. BUSINESSES AND SERVICES IN EIGHT GREEK VILLAGES*

	Tobacco village near Xanthe	Village A near Mesolongi	Village B near Mesolongi	Village in Central Greece	Mountain village near Lamia	Village near Agrinion	Village A in Macedonia	Village B in Macedonia
Population	1145	1062	2030	1372	1060	2915	1654	2493
Flour mills	6	1			2	3	2	
[illegible]ries	1		3	1		3		
[illegible]ies	6	8	3	7	6	21	7	8
[illegible]bershops	3	2	3	3	2	5		
[illegible]offeeshops	6	8	5	5	1	7	3	3
Carpenters	5				2			
Masons	12			4	4			
Shoemakers	5	1		2	1	4	1	1
Saddlemakers	1		1	2				
Tinsmiths	1					1		
Blacksmiths	2	1	2	3				
Butchers	2	5		4	3	6		
Tailors	1	1		3	1	1	2	3
Dressmakers	3	6		10	2			
Carriagemakers						2	1	
Yardgoods shops				2		1		
Tobacco-news			2			2		
Restaurants			6			4		

* Includes those services mentioned for two or more villages.
Source: Village studies by Near East Foundation, Greek Ministry of Agriculture, and United States Mission to Greece (mimeographed).

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1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Tobacco Growing in Thrace

249 276 656 During an interview with some peasants in the office of the commune secretary of Toxotae in Thrace during May 1955, I was surprised to see some of the men pull out pink cigarette paper in which they expertly rolled cigarettes for a leisurely smoke.

"But why the pink paper?" I wanted to know.

"We are tobacco producers," they answered with an air of distinct pride. "We can keep some of the crop for our own use, but must use pink paper to distinguish our cigarettes from those that are bought."

"Yes," a gendarme added. "Any time I see a person smoking a pink cigarette I can go up to ask for a certificate showing that he is a tobacco grower and thus entitled to 'roll his own'!"

249 [123] [312] This conversation, which lasted for more than four hours, gave me an even better understanding of tobacco farming than I had gained on previous trips, as did frequent visits in the fields with the peasants who were transferring the plants from the seedbeds to the carefully prepared land or hauling barrels of water in their oxcart from a spring or well to the place where the planting was going on. What was most helpful of all, however, was the intimate story of one tobacco village, as described in the Near East Foundation study mentioned earlier. It gave me a deeper realization of the problems that the people there continue to face.[1]

621 ● 162 [167] Dafnon, a village of 1145 people in 1952, is northwest of the city of Xanthe. This community, like so many in Northern Greece, was settled by Greek refugees from Asia Minor and the Pontus following the departure of 127 Turkish families in 1924. By 1935, 294 families had moved in, attracted as they were by the rich vegetation, the good climate of this semi-mountainous area, and the possibility of raising a high-priced product such as tobacco. When the first official land redistribution was carried out in 1935, and a second in 1938, it became apparent that the allotments were too small for the support of a family, and so people began to leave. Today there are 255 families.

621 36 The village, covering slightly over 70 acres, sprawls over a hill. Two former Turkish mosques have been converted into Greek Orthodox churches; six grocery shops have total assets of less than $1700; three of the six coffeehouses attract the young men because each has a gramophone and a battery radio; the village school, destroyed along with many of the houses during the guerrilla war in 1948, was rebuilt in 1950. Outside the village is an athletic field on which 30 young men, members of the sports club, practice faithfully in an effort to uphold their reputation as the best football (soccer) team in the area. In the evening, the streets are dark, for Dafnon has no electricity and its people must rely upon kerosene lamps.

[727] [526] [373]

621 463 423 Of the 255 families previously mentioned, 220 own land; 32 own no

1:Sanders Z-574 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Vlachs EH15
Sarakatsani EH14

health. A third effect is that agriculture is almost impossible and is in consequence despised. Finally, home comforts must be portable. That is why an abundance of rugs, blankets, carpets, and cushions seen in these migrations is a sign of wealth.

But what of the Sarakatsani, the Greek-speaking group?[10] Already on a recent drive between Thebes, Lamia, and Volos, cities in Boeotia and Thessaly, I had looked down from the winding mountain roads into their small winter settlements of conical reed huts and circular reed sheepfolds. As we had passed we found the men and boys with their flocks not far from the road. We stopped to pass the time of day.

"How is the pasture this year?"

"Not very good" was the cautious reply.

"Are you Koutso-Vlachs or Sarakatsani?"

"We are Sarakatsani, but we also are Greeks."

Nearer Volos we found that the Sarakatsani, who originally had their huts just on the outskirts of the village, had settled down, building permanent homes. It was a striking contrast to see the reed hut a few feet away from the square mud-brick and mud-plaster house and to know that in case the family got too large some of the members would retire to the old hut and get along very well.

It was in Kalpaki, however, a settlement beyond Ioannina toward the Albanian border, at the edge of the Iron Curtain, that we enjoyed true Sarakatsani hospitality. Actually a Greek peasant village, its members had been increased by the forty Sarakatsani families settling there since the war, primarily to take advantage of the land left untilled by people moving away from disturbed frontier conditions. These forty families really had another village, Kato-Pethini, one-and-a-half-hours walking distance farther up the mountains, where they had their stone houses — something exceptional for those supposed to be Skenites (tent dwellers). Since they were working the fields around Kalpaki, it was here they now lived all the year around, apparently content with their reed houses, most of which followed a rectangular pattern rather than the more common circular shape. The women handled most of the agricultural tasks, but the men went back to the old Kato-Pethini with the flocks and returned to Kalpaki every ten or fifteen days for a change of clothing and a bath. Konstantin, a twenty-two-year-old youth whom we found grazing his sheep around the edges of the cultivated Kalpaki fields, had come down below with his flock for that purpose.

He invited us into the hut to meet his mother and sisters. We first entered the anteroom of the simple reed structure, from which chickens flew out as we came in. There we saw the woolly puppies that would grow up to be the menacing sheep dogs so necessary for the shepherd when alone with his flock. There also was the inevitable water barrel and near the cooking hearth the *ghastra,* the dome-shaped cover that is like a dutch oven. We

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Sara Katsani EH14..
Vlachs EH15

On the credit side, one must reckon 5 to 7 okas of milk each year from the producing animals for family consumption, with some of this being worked into cheese. The family also has a supply of meat from the flock. But the greatest gain is a 15 percent annual increase in the flock that the owner can expect even if he sells the lambs listed in the table of income; this means that a year later the flock of 700 should number 805, barring serious diseases or natural disasters.

Some of the discussions revealed further interesting facts: winter pasture costs 50 drachmas per animal in winter and 20 in summer; a sheep needs more than one oka of salt each year; the chief shepherd, when he goes on business trips to arrange for the sale of his milk or lambs or to hire shepherds, travels by bus, sleeps in a hotel, eats in restaurants, and thinks of himself as a businessman; there is a small tax per oka of milk which is paid to the winter community by the "grocer," who buys the milk.

What was to have been a short conference beginning at five in the late afternoon extended to nine o'clock without a moment's let-up. There was much loud talking, which would lead a stranger to expect a fight the next minute; but then someone would make a humorous remark at which everyone would laugh. Use of pantomine, modulated voice control, appeal to the neutral listener to agree to the case one was presenting, humor, and willingness to follow an argument to its logical conclusion — all made one think of the agora of classic Athens transferred to a dimly lit, modestly furnished upstairs office of a gentle, well-informed government bureaucrat. And just at the crescendo of what seemed to be the verbal prelude to physical violence, the words "symphonia, symphonia" would ring out, thus showing that agreement had been reached. Voices and feelings would calm down for a while, before some new dramatic moment would build up again. Berates, the Karagoun, sat more quietly than the rest but seemed to enjoy the session just as much.

As we parted in the dark streets of Ioannina, where Turkish architecture with its balconies and minarets in the moonlight makes one suddenly feel very much a part of the East, Christos Berates agreed to visit us late on the next day in Konitsa and take us out to his night encampment.

In the time intervening, through the courtesy of the director of agriculture, I had an opportunity to read the classic Greek work on the nomads, published in 1925 as a bulletin of the Greek Agricultural Society under the title of *Nomadic, Permanent and Agricultural Livestock Production in Greece*.[11] It was most encouraging to find that the observations I had made corresponded as far as they went to those of the author, Demosthenes Sirakes. Needless to say, he provided many more details than I could have collected in the time at my disposal.

For one thing, he estimated the nomad livestock owners in 1925 at 13,700 families, divided as follows:

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Sara Katsani EH14
Vlachs EH15

Sarakatsani	5,956
Arvanito-Vlachs (Karagouni)	786
Koutso-Vlachs	3,409
Greek peasants (like Valtetsi people)	3,549

He also gave the following distribution, by families, of the Sarakatsani, the type of people we had visited at Kalpaki:

Western Thrace	699
Macedonia	1,499
Thessaly	794
Roumele	1,112
Epirus	492
Peloponnesos	1,390
	5,986

This book also indicated that there in Epirus I was in the center of the Karagouni group, since relatively few of their 786 families were geographically much farther eastward or southward.

The next afternoon, with Christos Berates, we headed into the countryside and saw within a mile of town his camp of four tents up on the left. Since his flocks had not yet arrived, he was somewhat disturbed and asked if we could drive back toward Kalpaki to meet them. We passed at least eight other flocks whose shepherds Berates knew and with whom he talked briefly. These shepherds were very happy to accept the cigarettes we offered, but they were both awed and mystified — to Berates' delight — at seeing him riding in an American car. They kept telling him that his flocks must be quite far behind. Even when a flock came into view at some distance, Berates could tell it was not his by the sound of the bells. His anxiety grew as dusk came on and we saw no more flocks on the road. Then suddenly he asked us to stop. He said, "they are over there!" and pointed far to the left. Sure enough, we heard the faint tinkle of bells and then about two hundred yards away saw the sheep coming. His flock, taking a short cut, had left the main route. He called to the shepherd and found that everything was in good order. Reassured, Berates was ready to go back to the camp to wait for his sheep.

We had to leave the car along the main highway and scramble up the high bank before finding the path that led us up the hill. There in a row, about ten feet apart, stood the four tents of brown homespun waterproof mohair, each stretched on a frame consisting of three poles tied at the top. The first tent was that of Christos and his son and daughter. A small fire of *pournari* (the evergreen oak with hollylike leaves) was replenished with fuel cut by a small, sharp ax. In that tent alone were seven big woven duffel bags, stuffed full of household goods or clothes. The floor of the tent was

1:Sanders Z-5 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

TABLE 4. AGE OF MARRIAGE IN TEN GREEK VILLAGES
(about 1951)

Village location	Age for men	Age for women
Near Veroia	From 18 and over; median age, 22.	From 17 and over; median age, 20.
Near Lamia	Age differences play a minor role due to heavy emphasis upon financial arrangements.	Women should be 18 before marriage.
In Macedonia	Between 20–25, even before completing military service.	From 18–22. At 25 girl is an old maid.
In Macedonia	Usually after 23. Men wait until they finish military service. Shortage of women here so men marry girls from two nearby villages.	From 18–25. In some cases girls under 18 elope. After 26, girl is an old maid.
Near Serrai	No information.	From 17–25, but usually around 20. After 25, girl is an old maid.
In Grammos	Serve in army first and marry older.	18 and above; at 25 girl considered old.
In Central Greece	After 25 when completing military service.	Can marry at 16, but usually do so at 20.
Near Agrinion	Complete army service and marry about 30.	From 21–25, seldom before 20. Old maids after 30.
Near Mesolongi	Cannot marry if they have unmarried sisters near their own age.	No strong restrictions about age.
Near Mesolongi	Generally complete military service. In 43 families studied, 30 unmarried men were 20–37.	Average age, 23. In 43 families studies, 14 unmarried women were 20–50.

Source: Village studies conducted by Near East Foundation, Greek Ministry of Agriculture, and United States Mission to Greece.

people get a chance to see each other at a fountain, on the street, or at some festival dance, although any conversation may still have to be surreptitious. Other social events where boys and girls meet occur at the beginning of the wheat harvest, the gathering of grapes, and the harvesting of olives. But once a few more daring young people have successfully flaunted the

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

584 581 178 [831] do not mean that the young people subscribe to the romance of the Hollywood movies where love is glorified as an end unto itself. By "arranged marriages" is meant the lack of initiative on the part of the young and the willingness on the part of the boy or girl to give up a preferred mate if the parents strongly object.

It is safe to say that the pendulum is swinging from the arranged to the marriage for love. But in most Greek villages the parents still play an active role in negotiating with each other on behalf of their children and in trying to forestall what they would consider an unfortunate selection. Where parents and children disagree in such cases the situation becomes known to the village at large, and public opinion sometimes supports the young people. The father may be told at the coffeehouse, "Why don't you let your daughter marry Theodore? He is not such a bad boy after all." And the neighboring women take the mother to task, reminding her that her husband was not such a wonderful catch when they first married but that he had worked hard, had done well, and had earned everybody's respect.

[626]

The Dowry

581 583 What are the criteria of a fortunate and an unfortunate selection? Young people were very explicit about this, although by no means unanimous in their answers. Looming large throughout most of Greece is the dowry, or economic resources which the girl brings to the new union.[1] One father from a village near Thebes summarized the situation as follows: "If you have gold sovereigns, you marry off your daughter; if not, you don't." In the villages the surplus of girls, existing since World War I, has been increasing. This came to light when we asked where the men sought their mates — in the home village or elsewhere. Often the reply would be: "Wherever the men can get the best *proika* [dowry]." But there were those who disagreed with this emphasis on money: "If you marry just for money, all day long the wife will hold the purse strings and then where will you be?" In the case of the girl, honor or chastity ranks high as does good health, without which the wife cannot be a good worker. Beauty and good looks are also most welcome, although now and then one would say that "beauty is not too important if the girl has a good heart." As for the man, wealth, education, and position make him a proper risk as a husband if he has a good reputation as well.

● [162]

These traits which prospective mates should possess have much meaning because in Greece marriage unites two families, and dowry arrangements are contracts between families and not just between two individuals. One keen observer of village life pointed out that "in a village one always hears people speak of families as 'good family' or 'not a good family.'" The standard of *good* is largely in terms of money. The individual from a good family has a big head start in life in a country where financial resources are

1:Sanders Z-5M (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Transposed to a rural setting, the coffeehouse seems rude by comparison, its patrons less well dressed, but it meets the same needs. In the village it has a variety of forms.

Coffeehouse Types

The coffeehouse, as used in this description, comes in at least three assorted forms. One form is the shop or small variety store which sells some merchandise and serves drinks as well. A second form concentrates on drinks alone, alcoholic and nonalcoholic. A third specializes in coffee and sweets and usually serves little if any alcoholic beverages. As one would expect, the larger the village, the greater the likelihood of finding the second and third types. To understand the social utility of the first type one must travel to a small village, such as Psathotopi on the Arta Plains.[1]

Psathotopi, with less than four hundred people, has three coffeehouses which are the only business establishments in the community. Each sells a few articles in addition to the coffee and ouzo. Women who want needles or marcaroni either go or send their children to the shops' windows to make the purchases, for they are not allowed to enter the shops, which are man's domain. The least prepossessing of the shops, interestingly enough, is the meeting place of the community officers. It is a branch-covered hut, four by five yards in size, which has no chairs or tables inside but only benches along the walls. Coffee, ouzo, and a few articles are sold here by the proprietor, who is also the church sexton. A second shop, of mud and reed construction, is larger (four by twelve yards) and contains four tables and six chairs, plus benches around the walls. Again, the merchandise consists of coffee, ouzo, and a few articles. The third shop, considered the best, is rented from the church. It is six by nine yards in size, of mud brick and stone construction. Its stock of merchandise is a little larger and it serves Turkish delight as a special attraction. This shop has five tables, twelve chairs, and more benches than the other two. In other words, these three shops represent the local commerce of Psathotopi.

In the Peloponnesos, when there was a lull in the conversation at a shop of three by five yards in a village of about six hundred, I noted what this emporium contained. On hand were cigarettes, Turkish delight, flints, ouzo, brandy, horseshoe nails, macaroni, kerosene lamp wicks, bobby pins, needles, thread, candy, sugar, and coffee. There was the customary counter, two tables and five benches around the walls. The kerosene lamp cast a kindly glow about the place, contrasting with the dark unlit village streets of a winter night. A wood stove, fed charily, provided warmth. When I passed this same shop in the daytime, I realized what an ideal spot its front courtyard provided for basking when the sun shone in the winter and for shade during the summer when patrons could sit under the plane tree and watch the women come to the fountain for water. All that was needed was a

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

supporting Greek version of "Standing on the Corner, Watching All the Girls Go By."

Or, in Northern Greece and the Grammos Mountains, one would find in the village of Kotili, with about six hundred people, that there were two shops which sold cigarettes and coffee.[1] A score of the men, in addition to being farmers and shepherds, were woodworkers; another score were masons, and one was a cobbler. That represented the specialization of that village, since all the other men were farmers-shepherds-laborers. But it is at coffeehouses such as those in Kotili, close by the border, that one gains an insight into the real meaning of Balkan politics. For here the older villagers will tell the visitor of the days back in the first decade of the century when Bulgarian *komitadjis*, while the area was still under Turkey, came to try to persuade the people to join the Bulgarian cause. But the people remained loyal to the orders of their church authorities and resisted the efforts of the Bulgarians to enroll their local children in special schools or to enlist the adults in a premature revolt against the Turks. As one listens to the stories of violence and national struggle, the surrounding mountains which at first seemed peaceful begin to assume a brooding look. And one learns that national traditions are preserved and passed on in the coffeehouse, with the old men telling the eager young men of the price that was paid to keep them Greek.

Vamvakia, on the Serrai plains, provides a final illustration of the combined variety shop–coffeehouse.[2] This village, too, numbers about six hundred people and has as its only business a cheese-making establishment and three coffeehouses. There is also one carriage maker who farms as well. The merchandise for the shops is brought from Serrai by the bus driver, who takes in the orders and brings back the supplies for a small fee. These coffeehouses are of brick and clay-mud construction and have the usual equipment of small tables and chairs. Two of them have battery radios for the entertainment of the customers. Coffee is the usual beverage, while ouzo and soda drinks (in summer) are also popular. Spoon sweets, such as vanilla or fruit preserves, are often sold.

We may conclude, therefore, that in most villagers of less than a thousand people one will generally find coffeehouses of the combined variety-shop type. Although the women may now and then view them as shops, the men almost invariably think of them as coffeehouses. This social function outweighs any economic function they might possess.

As size increases, say to more than a thousand people, the variety shops and grocery stores become separate establishments and the coffeehouse devotes itself almost exclusively to serving beverages. This is what most Greeks would consider the typical village coffeehouse, although the relative numbers of each kind are not known.

The specialized coffeehouses can frequently accommodate fifty to seventy

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

governmental structure which tied together these separated local governments into any larger whole. Thus, as Greece moved toward modern nationhood, the type of local government which had existed under the Ottoman Empire began to wither.

One Athenian professor said to me that after ten years of revolution (1821–1830) the people wanted a king who could end anarchy and bring order. They had to accept a centralized government and put up with laws not natural to the country but which were necessary if Greece were to appear "civilized" enough to get loans from abroad. "We still need a legal system agreeing better with our country," he concluded. This is one reason, he thinks, why the peasant tries to get around the laws; he does not look upon them as his laws, as Greek laws.

During the first forty years of this century, the greatest changes in community life occurred under Venizelos in 1912 and under Metaxas in 1935. Venizelos, for instance, refashioned the old demes, or local units consisting of several villages, and made each village a unit responsible for supporting many local services under a community council and president. The deme still had the taxing, police, and judicial powers. The central government attempted to supply teachers for communities, a step which meant much less local autonomy but which was essential if Greece were to have a uniform system of education. Many other activities which local governmental bodies had handled up to this time had to be approved by the nomarch (administrator of the nomos) and ministry. Even the Constitution of 1927, though leaving to local government matters managed directly by the citizens, left the definition of "local matters" so vague that the demes and communes were at the mercy of the legislators and ministries who, by law and decree, could "outline their powers, procedures, and revenues." [4]

Metaxas, after abrogating the Constitution of 1927, imposed on the total Greek population "modern" methods of hygiene, childrearing, and education. He even attempted to introduce early weaning and the use of bottles. In community affairs, local elections were abolished and local officials could be dismissed and replaced by the Minister of the Interior.

Today, according to one authority:

> The local government units in Greece are demes and communes. There are 217 demes and 5,746 communes. Demes, under the 1912 law, were those units with 10,000 or more population; but recent amendments allowed so many exceptions that there are now 144 below this minimum standard. Communes are supposed to have 300 or more people and an elementary school; but this standard was also relaxed so that now there are many below this figure. As a matter of fact, half of the communes today have less than five hundred inhabitants.[5]

Since such small population centers cannot support all of the expected services, some kind of amalgamation of units is thought desirable. But how

1:Sanders Z-5.4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Although a rare Puritan strain appears now and then, Greek religion is also supposed to be fun, as any attendance at a religious festival will show. In fact, most religious occasions provide an excuse for merriment, even during the ceremonies. To the uninitiated such behavior borders on the irreverent, but the Greek might well argue that joy and even levity should prove as pleasing to God as assumed sorrow or feigned piety. Indeed, festivals are as old as Greek religion itself, with each carrying its own sacramental message to be expressed in dance as well as in formal liturgy. But religious expression is not confined to formal occasions; it permeates the daily life of the people, as we shall see.

Orthodoxy and Greekness

To start any discussion of religion and the Greek peasant, it is necessary to state clearly and unequivocally that adherence to the official religion of Greece, the Greek Orthodox Church, is tantamount to being Greek. Only 2 to 3 percent of the population of the country are not members of the Orthodox Church. Though those comprising this small fraction may have political citizenship, may speak the Greek tongue, and may take pride in the legacy of ancient Greece, they are at best suspect Greeks if they do not nominally at least belong to the Orthodox Church.

But what is the syncretism that is called Orthodoxy? This question can be answered on at least two levels: first, that of the peasant and, second, that of the educated Greek. To the peasant, the coming of Christianity did not mean an important break with many of his previous practices, beliefs, and even deities. What were formerly deities became saints, with some of the more powerful deities becoming identified with the most powerful saints, such as the Holy Virgin. It seemed perfectly fitting and not at all surprising to find an old, old church dedicated to St. Theodore in the southern Peloponnesos, two of whose columns were from an ancient pre-Christian temple standing on their original pediments. Many scholars have described in considerable detail various aspects of this easy transition from pagan to Christian worship.[1] William Miller, a keen student of Greek life, has pointed out that the saints play a very important part in Greek life: their functions and names often prove that they are the legitimate descendants of the old Greek gods, the new religion having been grafted on to the old. He indicates that Helios, the sun god, has been succeeded by the Prophet Elias (Elijah), whose chapels crown almost every eminence in Greece; the Virgin has replaced Athena Parthenos, and the Parthenon in the Middle Ages was the Church of St. Mary, whether as a Greek Cathedral or as a Latin minster; St. Dionysios has dethroned Dionysis; St. George and the Dragon are the Christian version of Theseus and the Minotaur, so that the Theseum naturally became in Christian times the Church of St. George.[2]

Marcu Beza, who describes many pagan survivals with Christian names

1:Sanders Z-5,Y (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

part of the peasant population could be successfully transferred elsewhere, this would merely cause a shortage of labour in the fields under the present system of exploitation. A great part of the cultivated area would remain fallow and only be used for grazing. . . . In the tobacco villages the problem would be the reduction of the labour peaks in the spring and summer: these require all the labour available and even cause a fairly extensive seasonal migration. Mechanization might bring about some decrease in the April and May peaks. The result would be that more seasonal female labour would be needed for tobacco planting. The labour peak in August is caused by the tobacco harvest and this work cannot be mechanized or simplified. If the holdings are enlarged, more female labour would have to be attracted; on the other hand, however, the production per farm unit of the cash crops tobacco and wheat . . . would be augmented, thus increasing local prosperity.[4]

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In the second village studied, one located in the Megalopolis Basin, de Vooys and Piket were impressed by its remarkably deserted appearance. Many houses were unoccupied, abandoned terraces betrayed former vine growing, and bushes had grown up on formerly tilled fields. Why has this come about in a country where land is so scarce?

The agricultural unit was originally based on two cornerstones: growing grain and keeping sheep. Self-sufficiency was remarkably developed; only the sale of surplus products — derived from the sheep — supplied a scanty money income. When finally a money economy penetrated here, the inhabitants reacted to it by mass emigration: especially the younger generation moved away. At first this lightened the population pressures, but when the migration process persisted, it soon became clear that the consequences were serious. The older people eventually died and the land was left to descendants who lived elsewhere. When these heirs lived far off, either in Athens or abroad, they had little interest in such legacies. They neglected the land and permitted the other villagers to use it as common pasture.[5]

[166]

The writers conclude that only a radical change in the labor processes (mechanization and simultaneous enlargement of the holdings) and changes in the attitude of the peasants (enabling the founding of cooperative societies, together with the immigration of young families into this region, will turn this area around Megalopolis into a prosperous one. Thus we see the close connection between population shifts, economic trends, and social change.

Another factor affecting change in the village is the family head's economic ability to make the changes he would like. The Greek peasants, though numbering more than half (55 percent) of the total population, receive about 45 percent of the total national income.[6] The per-capita income of the 900,000 farm families runs lower than the national average of $185 per year, a figure permitting only minimal improvements, no matter how strong the desire.

178 434 [162]

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

121 105 features include the compact arrangement of its houses, with the fields surrounding them, its accessibility to paved roads, its mixed subsistence and cash crop farming, and the existence within the village of a school, two coffeehouses and stores, several church structures, and a resident priest. In a negative sense, one of Vasilika's features is that there is nothing unusual in its history or present situation which would markedly differentiate it from other farming villages of the region. It has never been the subject of any special agricultural extension campaigns, none of the villagers have wealthy overseas relatives interested in improving the village as a whole, and it is outside the orbit of the tourist. If there is anything unusual about the village, it was the arrival of several shepherd families in 1950 and their subsequent political and social integration into the community.

[162] Vasilika is suitable from the standpoint of field work techniques for several reasons. First, since it has a population of only 216, two field workers could expect to know everyone in the community. Second, the speech of the [197] inhabitants is a form of Greek with only minor dialectic variations from the [122] Athenian demotic form (see glossary) that we had studied in preparation for our work. And third, one of the families in the village was willing to have us [125] live in the upper story of their house, which is located close to the center of the village.

121 Vasilika's way of life must be understood as completely representative only of itself, but in some of its general features it has most in common with [184] other farming villages on the Boeotian plain. The degree to which the habits, values, and attitudes of the villagers resemble those of other Greeks, at this stage of our knowledge, must remain on the level of impressions. As a rural [171] settlement, however, Vasilika has many features in common with farming villages that are segments of old national cultures in other parts of the world. The culture of the village is assuredly not in all its aspects a uniquely Greek phenomenon. Students of similar villages in other parts of Europe, the Near East, Latin America, and Asia will find many features of the culture and social structure of Vasilika familiar to them. But even these specialists will find a goodly number of features and especially of combinations of features that are entirely unfamiliar, for they are features that are uniquely Hellenic.

Two problems of particular relevance to anthropological studies of the rural populations of modern nations have been considered: the usefulness of choosing a rural settlement as the unit of observation, together with the new lines of investigation such a choice requires; and the selection of a particular settlement for study. These problems present their difficulties, but anthropologists working in old national cultures have some advantages; they can consult the works of other specialists. In Greece, for example, an anthropologist need not act as his own historian, economist, political scientist, psychologist, and sociologist. Folklorists have long been collecting oral literature and folk costumes from all sections of the country. Greeks and non-Greeks alike have produced many varied reports on Greek life and culture, both ancient and modern. Neither does an anthropologist working in Greece have to act as a geographer or agrono-

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

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The Village: As a Setting

THE VILLAGE OF VASILIKA lies almost at the foot of Mt. Parnassos on the Boeotian plain. The oldest of its fifty-odd houses were built in the late nineteenth century by the grandfathers of some of the now adult villagers. Most of them came from the village of Parori two miles to the northeast. Until 1933, when Vasilika sued for and won separate status, the two settlements were classified by the central government as one community (*kinotis*). The parent village still has the larger population, with some 700 inhabitants, while Vasilika, in 1955–1956, had 216.

Both Vasilika and Parori have come to be called by these names only since 1955. During the Turkish occupation, and for more than a century after the liberation of the region, the Boeotian villages used the names the Turks had assigned to them. Parori was Biskeni Aghas; Vasilika was Kravasaras. But in the last decade, patriotic considerations have led to a change from the old names to ones based on Greek roots. *Parori,* in Greek, means "near a mountain" and is an appropriate name for a village which rests in the foothills of Parnassos. *Vasilika* means "royal" and was the name of a hill in the region where a famous battle against the Turks was fought. In some cases, the names by which the villages were known in classical Greek times were restored. Drachmani, for example, once again became Elatia.

Most of the villagers of Vasilika, in 1961, still called the village "Kravasaras." Indeed, the new sign pointing to the dirt road which leads into the settlement reads *Kravasaras,* in spite of the designation of the village in the provincial records as *Vasilika.* This type of double nomenclature is common in the entire region. The wives of Vasilika, most of whom come from the surrounding Boeotian villages, frequently refer to their former houses by their older Turkish names. These are the names which evoke for them the emotions associated with "my village." Their husbands, on the other hand, often refer to their wives' home villages by the newly given names. An outsider must resign himself to learning the double nomenclature if he is to avoid utter confusion.

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

the easy access to roads and transportation to and from the village has important consequences for its culture and social structure.

The Boeotian plain is bounded by mountain systems and the sea. Running west and north, the Parnis, Kithaeron, and Helicon ranges as well as Parnassos itself separate it from the plains of Attica. The town of Lamia on the small Sperchios plain to the north and the west can be reached only by traversing parts of the Kallidromon and Ghiona mountains. To the east, an extension of the Kallidromon range makes access to the Gulf of Atalanti difficult. But the most important road which runs over and around the mountains and through the plains from Athens to Thessalonika has been paved throughout its length since World War II. It is now a two-lane asphalt highway which serves as a truck and bus route of major importance in the communications system of the country. In most of Boeotia, the highway runs more or less parallel with and not far from the tracks of the Athens-to-Thessalonika railroad.

The village of Vasilika lies on the slope of a low ridge just a half mile off this main highway. Since the summer of 1956, a local bus comes through the main street of the village twice a day, at 6:00 in the morning and at noon.

Going in the direction of Athens, ninety miles distant, the bus passes a British Petroleum (BP) station and restaurant a mile and a half down the road and traverses several villages. Its destination, however, is usually Levadhia, fifteen miles from Vasilika. Levadhia is the provincial capital and marketing center of some 12,000 population. Here bus connections to Athens may be made.

In the opposite direction, the nearest village of some size and importance is Kifisokhori. It lies five miles up the road from Vasilika. Kifisokhori has, among other facilities not available in Vasilika, flour mills, large grocery stores, barbers, doctors, a pharmacy, a movie, and several taxis. Whether they use the bus or load their horses with flour for the mill and walk by way of the shortcut through the fields, the people of Vasilika go most frequently to Kifisokhori.

Further north and off to the west, but only about eight miles past Kifisokhori, is Amphiklia. This town is the seat for tax collections and other governmental financial matters for the fiscal district in which Vasilika is situated. On the 16th of each month, for example, the priests of the village within Amphiklia's jurisdiction gather in the town to collect government salaries. Amphiklia also has a coeducational gymnasium (the approximate equivalent of an American high school and junior college combined). Several boys and girls from Vasilika live in that town to attend the school.

The people of Vasilika can also travel in the direction of the sea. The dirt road which starts at the highway leads to the houses of the village, then becomes the main street, and finally extends beyond the settlement between the borders of the fields and the foot of the ridge on which the village is situated. Never free of ruts, of dust, and in the winter, of mud, the road narrows and deteriorates further as it passes the last village house. Nevertheless, pedestrians, donkeys, horses, tractors, and even, with some difficulty, trucks and buses can get through. Half a mile past the last village house, at the banks of the Kiphisus, this road meets the road to Atalanti. Buses from Levadhia that have turned off

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

parents have carefully prepared for them, is a form of pleasure so well recognized that there is a specific verb to express it: *kamarono*.

The economic activities of the family through which its members actually carry out a large part of their obligations are usually conducted by an entire household. A household in Vasilika, however, is neither limited to nor does it always include a husband and wife and their children, that is, a family. This is a result of the operation of the marriage, dowry, and inheritance system in the region (to be discussed fully in Chapter 4), and of unpredictable specific circumstances. Here it is sufficient to say that in 1961, of Vasilika's fifty-one households, twenty-six were composed of the elementary family; eight, in addition to the parents and their children, included the widowed mother of the husband; seven had a husband and a wife living alone; and three included one married son and his wife and children living in the same house with his father and mother and unmarried brothers and sisters. Of the remaining seven households, each had its own unique composition because of recent deaths in the family or other special circumstances. Whatever the particular situation, however, no Vasilika household includes anyone who is not a kinsman, nor indeed any adults outside the kinship range of parents, their grown children, or adult brothers and sisters.

Of the fifty-one households in Vasilika, thirty-five are headed by farmers who own some land. Although, for various reasons, these farmers are not all equally dependent on their land holdings for their total subsistence and income, their round of life as independent working farmers is one important expression of the aims and obligations of their families. The yearly round of agricultural activities is devoted principally to the production of grapes for wine, wheat for bread, and cotton and tobacco for cash. The farming households also engage in subsidiary activities which contribute to the production and processing of the main crops, and which add to the food supply and income of the households.

Major Crops

The first event of the agricultural year is the pruning of the grape vines. Since grapes are not a commercial crop, each farmer devotes only one or two *stremata* (four *stremata* equal one acre) to viticulture. Wine is made and consumed at home, and each farmer aims to produce only enough grapes to keep him in wine for a year. Pruning of the grape vines starts after the winter rains have abated and the early spring sun appears. Only two or three "eyes" are left on a vine, and the cuttings are carried back to the storehouses to be saved for use as fuel for spit-barbecuing the Easter lambs. Again, as we have seen, farmers are particularly conscious of fatigue in the course of the three or four days it usually takes to do the pruning. Palms have softened over the winter, the wooden handle of the pruning hook raises blisters, and the unaccustomed stooping and pulling motions cause backaches. After the pruning, deep hoeing is done to pile the earth around the short, stout vines. The work is done with a long-handled heavy hoe and, in Vasilika, is considered man's work, as is the pruning. Since the two

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Vasilika

tinue at only a slightly diminished rate. But the villagers' conception of the separation as a drama of great significance is based on the change in point of view which accompanies it. Henceforth, each small family is free to develop its own resources as it wishes. The different personalities of the brothers and their wives manifest themselves in the way they administer their property and raise their children, and, most importantly each brother can now freely give his entire loyalty to his own wife and children and consider all new situations from the standpoint of how they will affect the smaller unit. He is now at liberty, in the village view, to make decisions advantageous to himself, even at the expense of his brothers. The burden of consideration for the welfare of others has been lifted and the brothers are now as free as the rest of the villagers to be rivals of each other. This is not to say that all kinship rights and obligations towards one's adult brothers and sisters and their children disappear, but rather that the emphasis of most intense concern shifts at the time of property division. Indeed, it is generally agreed that the longer harmonious relations among the brothers can be maintained, the better. As a matter of fact, it is just for the sake of keeping good relations that the villagers claim they draw lots for the patrimony. They explain that by so doing, they can manage the business of dividing the property *me agbapi* (with love). No brother can blame any other for the particular share he happened to draw.

The villagers take it for granted that neither impartiality nor altruism is possible in situations which involve one's own interests. They do not believe that anyone, even one's own brother, can act fairly out of principle. Therefore, they feel, some mechanism is required to enforce equity. The strength of their mistrust of the fairness of others is illustrated by a villager's response to a question as to why the mother was not invited into the deliberations. (Mothers who are still active normally have the respect of their adult sons and participate in other kinds of decisions.) The son explained that it was because she might show favoritism toward one of the sons. This explanation was given in spite of the fact that the lot system effectively makes it impossible for anyone to implement favoritism. It is chance that makes the decision as to who gets which share and when faced with the operation of uncontrollable forces of the universe, the Greek villagers say, "*Ti na kanume,*" "What can we do?" From their point of view, adverse decisions left to chance are easier to bear than decisions made by self-seeking humans. Therefore, in situations over which they could have control, they prefer, if possible, to rearrange the situation into one in which chance, or fate, if you will, makes the final decision.

In the late 1950's, the number of households in which any married son was still living with his father and mother was small, and there were none in which several married sons were living this way. The reasons for this are first, the decreasing number of sons who are remaining farmers; second, the age distribution of Vasilika's male population (relatively few men in the marriageable age group); and third, the increasing age for marriage even of farming sons. Five of Vasilika's elementary family households were the result of the separation of two sets of brothers in the early 1950's. In Vasilika, therefore, the exist-

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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IV

THE ORGANIC BODY

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Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

THERE is an old story, still to be heard in the mountain villages, which tells how God fashioned the dry land; how He put all the earth through the mesh of His sieve: here a pile of fine rich soil, the granary of Africa, and there another which was Sicily. When all was done there remained within the sieve a heap of stones and dross: God threw them over His shoulder, and there was Greece. *Tout ce païs*, remarks an old traveller, *est plein de hautes montagnes.*

It is important to bear in mind the physical characteristics of the setting within which the Greek Church carries out her work of reconciliation and renewal. Greece is a land of high mountains and narrow coastal plains; of few towns and wretched communications. The majority of her people live, as they have lived from time immemorial, in small rural communities widely dispersed among the mountains, winning a laborious subsistence from the parched and stony soil which scarcely covers her rocky skeleton. More than half of the whole area of Greece is utterly barren; much of what remains consists of forest and poor pasture; less than one-fifth is under cultivation. Greece and poverty, the saying runs, have ever been sisters.

At the time of the last census approximately one-seventh of the total population of Greece dwelt in the Athens-Piraeus region, the phenomenal growth of which during the last 100 years has set it strangely apart from the rest of the country—even though "the equipages of Athens", as the Abbé de St. Michon observed, "have not quite the freshness nor the elegance of those seen in the Champs Elysées". Salonica had a population which was approaching 300,000; the next largest town, however, was Patras with less than 80,000 inhabitants. Most of the remaining towns, a large proportion of which are situated in the fertile plains of Macedonia and Thrace, are market towns and centres of rural industries but little more.

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
EH1 Greece EH1

369 Thus, despite a certain drift from the villages to the towns during the last few years, the average Greek is still a countryman. Even the Athenian, if one delves into his personal history, is generally found to have his roots in some mountain village of the Peloponnese or in one of the islands. The generality of the Greek bishops are charged with the pastoral care of a flock dispersed in village communities among the mountains; a single market town or *comopolis* forming the centre of the ecclesiastical as of the civil administration.

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The Church of Greece, from the point of view of outward organisation, consists of sixty-seven dioceses: thirty-four belonging to Old Greece and the remainder to the territories annexed to the Greek kingdom after the Balkan wars of 1912-13 and the first world war. These latter dioceses, though formally subject to the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople, are at present placed under that of the Holy Synod of the Hierarchy, which is presided over by the Archbishop of Athens and of all Greece. This body, which is made up of the metropolitans of the sixty-seven dioceses, assembles every three years and may be summoned on other occasions if need arise. Extraordinary business apart, however, the affairs of the Church are administered by the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, which is composed of twelve bishops under the presidency of the Archbishop. All the bishops are called in turn to serve on this body, and during the greater part of their year as *synodikoi* (which normally recurs about once every five years), they reside in Athens, going home to their dioceses only during the heat of the summer and for the great festivals.

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In Greece the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church has not been replaced by 'the Churches'. According to the figures of the 1940 census, out of a total population of 7,344,860 persons, no less than 7,090,192 were Orthodox, while the non-Orthodox Christians amounted to a bare 51,851. This small minority consists of Roman Catholics and a few so-called 'evangelicals' who came to Greece in the early 'twenties from Asia Minor and owe their origin to the proselytising zeal of American missionaries. All of them are confined to the islands and to a few towns on the mainland: in the country districts a Dissenter would be a curiosity indeed.

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[793] The Greek diocese is, by English standards, very small and sparsely populated; in some respects more akin to a rural deanery than to our overgrown dioceses. Its average population—if we leave on one side the

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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Athens-Piraeus region—is no more than about 85,000 souls. In terms of parishes there is considerable disparity between different dioceses: that of Ioannina, in Epirus, one of the largest, includes 230 parishes—many of them mere hamlets of forty or fifty families—while that of Nevrokopi, on the frontier of eastern Macedonia, has only fifteen. The average number is rather less than 100. If we take the twenty-four dioceses of Macedonia and Thrace, for example, we find that the average works out at seventy-eight parishes to the diocese, while the metropolitans of Philippi and Neapolis, Xanthi, Nevrokopi, Eleftheroupolis, Nea Zichni, Alexandroupolis and Hierissos all have less than sixty communities committed to their care, and only five bishops—the metropolitans of Salonica, Drama, Kilkis, Serres and Florina—more than 100.

As against this comparatively low average population and number of parishes one has, of course, to set in the balance the extremely primitive nature of the communications which the Greek bishop can command. To this day the majority of the villages of northern Greece are inaccessible to wheeled transport, at any rate during the winter months; and while the truly remarkable achievements of the last few years—the repair of the shattered railways, and the construction of roads and air-strips—have given Greece a very fair system of long-distance communications, the facilities which most bishops enjoy for travel within their own dioceses remain much as they have been since apostolic days. The metropolitan of a country diocese will think nothing of long journeys by mule or mountain pony across appallingly difficult terrain, his episcopal vestments slung from the high wooden saddle; of fording torrents swollen by the melting snows, and negotiating precipitous slopes where the path seems scarcely to afford adequate foothold for a goat—much less for an elderly ecclesiastic. It is little wonder that many mountain villages saw their father in God but seldom, even in the days before the natural hazards which confronted the traveller had been supplemented by mines and wandering bands of *katsapliades*, as the Communists were styled in the villages.

When we turn to the internal organisation of the dioceses we find many features which cannot but seem strange to most western Christians. We have come to take for granted the fact that a bishop, charged with the pastoral care of a vast and unmanageable diocese, inevitably delegates most of his priestly functions to his parish clergy. In the small country dioceses of Greece, however, the bishop retains a far greater measure of

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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795 648 [162] 722 166 territory. Kato Nevrokopi, where the Greek Metropolitan has his throne, is a large village, or *comopolis* (it had a pre-war population of about 2,000 souls), about twelve kilometres from the frontier.[1/4] The whole of this region was evacuated by the civilian population in March, 1941, when invasion seemed imminent, most of the refugees taking shelter in Drama, some forty-five kilometres to the southward. When the Germans abandoned eastern Macedonia to the Bulgars, all who were able to do so fled to Salonica, Verroia and other towns beyond the river Strymon. It was only after the withdrawal of the Bulgars in the autumn of 1944 that the Greek population began to trickle back. 727 In 1949 no less than twelve of the thirty villages of the diocese were in ruins and uninhabited, and the number of the orphans was said to [736] approach 900. Kato Nevrokopi itself, though it still bore traces of the [346] great battle which had raged about the forts of the Metaxas line and their heroic defenders, had come through the years of occupation and the more recent troubles almost unscathed, save for the deliberate destruction of the metropolis and the school.

796 [793] It had been arranged that the Metropolitan should celebrate the liturgy next morning at the village of Dasoto, four or five miles away, which would be keeping its patronal festival. The day was ushered in by bugle-calls and a great beating of drums, revealing shortly after five o'clock that the newly-formed scout troop was already abroad. These [233] martial noises were soon mingled with the soft ringing of a multitude [512] of bells, as the cattle were driven out through the narrow paths between the cottages to the dusty river bed where they assemble each morning [493] before moving off to the pastures. By a little before seven it had become evident that others besides ourselves were keeping the feast at Dasoto, as a few carts drawn by oxen or buffaloes, together with some solitary riders, rattled across the bridge and headed westwards. We followed [487] in a jeep. Our path lay through fields of maize and tall sunflowers, above which occasional glimpses of a blue and white flag of vast dimensions indicated the scouts' line of march, along tracks which a heavy shower would render impassable to anything on wheels. Dasoto [361] came into view after a quarter of an hour; a cluster of lime-washed [342] cottages, the church prominent amongst them, on the lower slopes of the heavily wooded heights that surround the plateau.

[793] The parish priest and some thirty or forty men and boys had come as far as the outskirts of the village to welcome us. The Bishop's vestments,

[1/4 i.e. Bulgarian frontier - ANALYST]

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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monasteries are there represented, each one inaccessible on its rock. Wayfarers seeking hospitality strive to attract the notice of monastic porters, remote and unheeding in their aerial gate-houses. Venerable bearded figures in flowing black robes dangle in nets above the abyss, or swing with grave and solemn motion upon rope-ladders; while their brethren labour unceasingly at windlasses and capstans high above the earth, and hoist provisions, firewood and travellers to their fastnesses among the rocks.

The Thebaid of Staghi to-day presents a very different picture: no more than four of the original twenty-four foundations are now inhabited. The history of the monasteries from the sixteenth century onwards is one long record of steadily declining numbers. There were interminable struggles for supremacy between the abbots of the Great Meteoron and the superiors of the hermitage of Panaghia Doupiani, who strove to retain their ancient title of 'Father of the ascetics of Staghi'. Discord rent the communities, there were disputes concerning the lands belonging to the monasteries, and before long the number of those inhabited was reduced to fourteen. The English travellers Holland and Hughes, who paid brief visits to the Meteora during the early part of the nineteenth century, found only ten remaining. During the further twenty years that elapsed before the advent of the Hon. Robert Curzon with his escort of brigands three more convents were abandoned.

As late as 1830 many of the caves which mark the perpendicular rock face were apparently inhabited: though whether by hermits or, as seems more probable, by refugees, is not entirely clear. Urquhart describes these cave-dwellings: some "like handsome houses, with regular landing-places, windows and projecting balconies", others, the smaller and meaner ones, "shut in with basket work, with a hole to enter by", and reached by curious ladders hanging like chains, some of which were drawn up when their lord and master was installed in his aerial dwelling; while those which were longer and gave access to the more elevated among the caves were pulled up fifteen or twenty feet from the ground and let down with "a strange clattering noise". All have been swept away and only the dark holes in the face of the cliff remain. By 1911 only thirty-eight monks were left, dispersed among four communities: the Great Meteoron, Aghios Barlaam, Aghios Stephanos and Aghia Trias. A monk from the Belgian monastery of Amay, who visited the Meteora in 1931, found the number of the

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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175 792 [162] monks still further reduced to twenty-one. A decade of war has added a catastrophic chapter to this melancholy tale of gradual decline, for it was not possible that the monks should remain aloof from the calamities which have befallen their native land during those terrible years. The day was long since flown when the monks could look down from the security of their rocky retreats upon scenes of slaughter and pillage as armies came and went on the plain below; and, turning away with the sign of the cross and a *Kyrie eleison*, go back to their labours. The unscalable heights were impregnable no longer.

792 123 [491] I spent several days at the monasteries in January 1950, accompanied by a young theologian from the Russian Academy in Paris. Heavy falls of snow had blocked the Metsovo pass—the one road that leads north-westwards from Kalambaka across the heights of Pindos, connecting the plain of Thessaly with Ioannina and Epirus—and the cold was intense. We had slept the previous night at Trikkala, where the Metropolitan had shown us a number of charred manuscripts which had been salvaged from the monasteries. Our first concern upon reaching Kalambaka the following morning was to seek out the curate of the place, Father Christos Benda, whom we discovered wrapped in a blanket at his fireside. He was not a little startled at the sudden apparition of two Frankish visitors in the doorway of his cottage, and regarded somewhat gloomily our proposal to sleep at the monasteries for the duration of our stay, assuring us (not without reason, as we subsequently discovered), that the monks had little enough bedding to protect their own persons from the bitter winds which swept the exposed summits. He promised, nevertheless, to come with us to look for the *Igoumenos* of the Great Meteoron who was said to have descended from his airy retreat that morning in order to deal with some piece of monastic business. First, however, we were taken to see the fourteenth-century basilica with its remarkable marble *ambon*, and to visit the school, where we found classes of 150 children overflowing the one available building (which had perforce to serve as primary school in the forenoon and as high school for the rest of the day), and packed into two small chapels which had been furnished with desks. The children were delighted at the diversion caused by the appearance of the *xenoi*. Papa Christos carried us off in search of the abbot who was finally run to earth in a tavern where, monastic business satisfactorily despatched, he was disposing of a dish of vegetables.

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later in the day. There was, alas! no bedding at the monastery, said Father Ambrose: everything had been carried off by the Communists, to equip a field-hospital which they had established in the mountains to the northward; "What is to be done? But we will find something for you when you return this evening."

We spent the rest of the day scrambling about the rocks and visiting long-abandoned monasteries and hermitages. At St. Nicolas—fast falling into ruin, and where one must tread with circumspection—we found a few paintings remaining in the two chapels and the refectory, as well as an iron chest containing liturgical books and an eikon of the Forerunner; elsewhere, nothing save slowly crumbling masonry and the all-enveloping silence. We paid a fleeting visit to Kalambaka and returned to St. Barlaam a little before sunset laden with cognac and cigarettes. Like the Great Meteoron, this monastery, which crowns the towering cliffs of Drakospelaia, was until quite recent times inaccessible save by net and windlass. It is a sixteenth-century foundation, having been built about 1517 by two brothers from Ioannina—Nektarios and Theophanes—on the site of the fourteenth-century hermitage founded by the solitary from whom the monastery takes its name. In 1950 it was inhabited by six monks. The *Igoumenos*, Father Christopher, told us he had been at the monastery for twenty-one years, and for another twenty years at a convent to the westward of Trikkala. He was seventy-seven—twelve years older than Father Ambrose, an Athenian who was ordained many years ago at Moni Petraki in the shadow of Lykavettos. This was the only one of the monasteries where we came across any novices. Father Bessarion (who came from a village near Larissa and who had seen service with the British army in the Middle East), had been received only five months earlier, as had another young deacon, a native of Chios. There were in addition two simple monks, one of them more than ninety years old.

That night it snowed heavily. Father Bessarion produced a threadbare carpet which, folded double, afforded us a little protection against the bitter cold; and he and a shepherd from Kalambaka, who was living at the monastery, kindled a huge fire which blazed on the open hearth of our cell until morning, while the wind howled along the deserted galleries, the ancient timbers groaned and shivered, and it seemed that an exceptionally heavy squall would send the whole monastery with its domed chapels and its frail scaffolding of cells and domestic buildings spinning off into the abyss. When daylight came we seemed to be sus-

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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women) afford a systematic course of instruction in Christian doctrine and practice for boys and girls between the ages of nine and twenty-two. These children have all, it must be borne in mind, been full communicant members of the Church since infancy. There are no confirmation classes in Greece, and, within the new movements at least, the period of adolescence, when so overwhelming a proportion of our own children lose all vital contact with the Church, is commonly that at which the young Greek Christian begins to play an active part in the life of his local community.

The size of the catechetical schools, even in the provincial towns of northern Greece (where such schools were not founded until the late 'thirties and had hardly established themselves when these districts were overwhelmed by foreign occupation and Communist sedition) is often quite staggering. The figures for the town of Kilkis—a few miles north of Salonica and the scene of some of the bloodiest massacres of the whole war—may serve as an illustration. During the year 1948–49, when the war with the Communists was at its height, membership of the catechetical schools was as follows:

	Boys	*Girls*
Junior schools	782	696
Middle schools	165	180
Senior schools	55	77
Young workers	123	293
	1125	1246

These are the figures for a Macedonian market town whose pre-war population scarcely exceeded 7,000. Even allowing for the fact that several hundreds of the children belonging to the catechetical schools in 1948–49 were refugees from the villages of the diocese, they show the astonishing development of these new Christian schools within a bare ten or eleven years.

Remarkable as these figures may seem they are by no means exceptional. All over Greece catechetical schools have sprung up as it were overnight and multiplied with incredible rapidity, despite the lack of trained leaders. At Kilkis the metropolitan had the assistance of one priest-theologian. In the adjoining diocese of Siderokastro, where the bishop had only a seminary-trained preacher to help him, and where

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THE WATERS OF MARAH

794 [162] [793] catechetical schools were in September, 1949, quite a recent innovation, membership of the schools, in a town considerably smaller than Kilkis, had already risen to 957 and was increasing rapidly. In and around Salonica the number of catechetical schools under the supervision of the Zoë Brotherhood rose from less than thirty in 1942 to 170 in 1949.

The catechetical school normally meets every Sunday, and the teaching is based on one of the two courses now in circulation—the first issued by the Zoë Brotherhood, the second (only recently published) by the official Home Mission. While the parallels with our own Sunday Schools and 'catechisms' are evident, these Greek schools have a character which is all their own. Particularly impressive is the stimulus which is given to the active apostolate of the laity. The children are from their earliest days encouraged to pull their weight in the life of the local *ekklesia*. At Verroia, in the spring of 1950, boys of nine were visiting the townsfolk and delivering letters from the *hierokeryx* of the metropolis. At Salonica, where the catechetical schools under the auspices of the Apostoliki Diakonia were normally directed by a student of the theological faculty of the university, the teacher would at the end of a lesson despatch his pupils, two by two, to call at the homes of any who through sickness or for some other cause had been unable to be present that day. When the defaulter was run to earth he would be given a brief *résumé* of the afternoon's lesson.

794 883 The catechetical schools form the base of an impressive structure still in process of creation. In describing the Christian youth movements that now flourish in almost every diocese of Greece I will start with those connected with the Zoë Brotherhood, which are the most important. The reader will recall that as early as 1877 Father Eusebius (then chaplain to the School of the Logos) was experimenting with small groups of young people and adults, and such *omades* have played an important part in the extension of his teaching and influence.

First, then, the movement known as *X.M.O.* (*Christianikai Mathetikai Omades*). This is made up of selected members of the catechetical schools between the ages of fifteen and eighteen. Its members try to bring others to the catechetical schools, to spread sound sacramental teaching, to distribute Christian publications and generally to set a high standard of conduct by their example. Each group consists of from fifteen to twenty members, meets once or twice a week and is led by an undergraduate (at any rate in Athens and Salonica).

These student-leaders are drawn from another youth organisation

1946, United States influence has replaced British, and in 1951 Greece was admitted to the NATO alliance along with her neighbor, Turkey. Greece thus belongs to the free world, yet her geographical position, along one margin of the Communist heartland of eastern Europe, creates a constant threat to the nation's security.

Ever since the second world war the Greeks have therefore had to wrestle simultaneously with the problems of poverty and of political insecurity. Both were old problems in Greek history, but the scale was new – so much so that Greek resources were by themselves quite inadequate to meet the difficulties that loomed large after 1945. Only the delivery of substantial amounts of foreign, and especially of American, aid prevented political collapse and Communist revolution in the years just after the war.

This book will try to describe the successes and failures in this struggle, and make an estimate of the prospects for ultimate success in relieving poverty and improving social stability in Greece. Before launching on an account of what has been achieved, however, something should be said about the character of Greek society, with special attention to the points of difference that divide us in the United States from the Greeks.

Life in the Villages

The fundamental fact about Greece today is that in spite of the rather rapid growth of towns and cities in recent decades, the country still remains predominantly agrarian. In 1950, according to a special agricultural census, rural families comprised 4,770,783 persons, or 63 per cent of the estimated total population of the country in that year. Some of these families supplemented their agricultural income by seasonal employment in towns or on roads or other public works, and should, perhaps, not be counted as full-time farmers.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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Lofiscos

[Villages of the Plains]

than 400 stremmata of cultivated land. Presumably the owner had divided legal title among relatives or friends without surrendering real control of his land.)

The village is very small. In 1956 its population was only 130,[1] yet it occupies no less than 6,000 acres, excluding the absentee landowner's estate, which is counted as part of the lands of Lofiscos by official government reckoning. This amounts to more than 46 acres per capita; and even though more than half of the land remains rough pasture, subject to flooding for part of every year, such an abundance of land represents solid wealth by Greek peasant standards. And indeed, the village is wealthy. Farmers find little difficulty in accumulating gold sovereigns with which to dower their daughters, for wheat is always in demand and a government purchase scheme keeps the price stable and well above world market levels. In spite of the shabby appearance of their houses and the untidy appearance of their clothes, the families of Lofiscos are, by their own standards, very well off. Almost all of them probably have several hundred gold sovereigns hidden away, but this no stranger could ever expect to know.

The tribulations of the second world war, of the occupation and of the guerrilla war made almost no impression on Lofiscos. The young men served in the army, of course, and saw something of the outer world. But on their return they seemed to fit back smoothly into the familiar routine. As the guerrillas never

1. This and all subsequent figures for village populations are rough approximations. Village records do not include any sort of census figure. They are confined to registration of births, marriages and deaths, and the most important function they serve is to provide the basis for the annual call-up of military recruits. Moreover, a family often remains registered in a village long after it has moved away; in such instances births and deaths are likely to be omitted from the village books, and may or may not be recorded elsewhere. One must therefore depend upon informal estimates of village officials. This leaves a considerable margin for error, unless the officials consulted are unusually careful.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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Nea Eleftherohori

[Villages of the Plains]

in 1933. Since the war the number of recorded births has never exceeded 19, and sank as low as 11 in 1953. Deaths have declined also, but not as sharply, so that the natural increase of the village population in the early 1950's ranged from 6 to 12 persons a year instead of the 30 to 40 a year of the early 1930's. This decrease is the more striking since the total population of the village grew from something like 450 at the time the basic distribution of land was made in 1927 to 875 in 1956.

Two defects are obvious in the adjustment which the people of Nea Eleftherohori are making to their straitened circumstances. In the first place, there is no certainty that the boys pursuing a secondary school education will be able to find jobs when their training is completed. In 1956, there were three or four graduates of the gymnasium living in the village, waiting for something to turn up. One of them was working as a laborer on a road gang – a fate considered a terrible indignity to an educated man, even by his peasant relatives. But I was told that so far, "sooner or later," everyone who had finished the gymnasium course had been able to get a job in town, usually in the government civil service; and the parents who were sending their boys to school seemed to have no serious doubts that in due course their sons, too, might find a government desk to sit behind. If their hopes should be betrayed, then of course the whole campaign for maintaining family standards of living will be in danger of breaking down. Bitter disillusionment and discontent may then gain ground, especially among the educated young men. This is a real danger, for even a civil service as capacious as that of Greece cannot absorb indefinitely the gymnasium graduates of many villages like Nea Eleftherohori; and, of course, the gymnasium training does not prepare the boys for anything but white-collar work.

The second defect is psychological. Long postponement of marriage through the dowry represents a drastic alteration

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Nea Eleftherohori

[Villages of the Plains]

may expect to maintain or modestly increase the standard of living they have enjoyed hitherto, it is likely that discontent will remain personal and private. As yet, hard work, saving and waiting seem to promise a solution; and with such hope present discontents seem bearable. But if some day the hopes turn out to have been in vain, then one may expect to see an active movement of political dissent and revolt appear in Nea Eleftherohori once more.

As compared with Lofiscos, therefore, Nea Eleftherohori is a good deal farther along the path toward a new social and psychological adjustment of village life. The less spacious economic base from which Nea Eleftherohori started compelled an earlier and more energetic adoption of new agricultural techniques; the old-fashioned frame in which the peasant family and community flourished from time immemorial has largely been transformed or discarded; and city standards have come in, not so much in fact as in aspiration.

PALEO CORINTHOS

Paleo Corinthos, or Old Corinth, stands on the site of the ancient city, on the isthmus between the Corinthian and Saronic gulfs. The imposing mass of Acrocorinth, crowned by extensive and well-preserved Venetian fortifications, dominates the village, whereas the ruins from classical times are comparatively inconspicuous. The modern town of Corinth lies on the shore some five miles off, and has taken over the commercial functions once centered in the ancient city. Until very recently, Old Corinth remained the mere village it had been in Turkish times.

It is, however, a much larger village than either Lofiscos or Nea Eleftherohori. Its population was officially reckoned to be 1,530 in 1947; by 1956 the figure had grown to 1,850. This growth was only partly due to natural increase, for the village

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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Kotta

[Hill Villages]

ventured into territory controlled by the Greek army or police. 722
Resentment against the Greek authorities was widespread, al- 669
though one man in the village, in speaking to me privately, [464]
made it clear that he at least did not like to contribute to the
upkeep of the guerrilla garrison that controlled the village.

The population of the village was 630 persons, of whom over 621
200 were under fifteen years of age. Thus there was about one 433
fifth of an acre of agricultural land per head, land that was mis- [162]
erably poor to begin with. Clearly the village could not live on [511]
its agriculture; and even when it had been safe to graze sheep
on the barren mountain slopes, as it was not in 1947, the village
still could not begin to maintain itself on local resources. The
villagers calculated that they could produce food for about four
months in the year; the deficit had to be made good outside.

In prewar years two means had been found to make ends [463]
meet. The men of the village were accomplished masons, and [333]
traveled far and wide over Greece seeking work as builders. In [464]
addition, they found work in various sorts of heavy construc-
tion – road building, irrigation works and the like. But in 1947
such jobs were not to be had, at least not by men with a Slavic
accent.

The second, and perhaps more important, resource was remit- 621
tances from abroad. The village had begun to send men over- 433
seas, mainly to Canada and Australia, even before the first 457
world war. During the interwar years, the migration had contin- 167
ued despite growing barriers to free movement. In Toronto,
Canada, and in Sydney, Australia, natives of Kotta had founded
regular little colonies, and the members of these emigrant
groups, all of whom were related to one another in some degree,
helped to finance the continued emigration. Each family ex-
pected to send at least one son overseas, and that son was in
turn expected to send back enough of his earnings to keep his
parents fed and clothed, and to help out his brothers and sisters
who stayed home.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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Kotta

[Hill Villages]

who stayed home. When the Greek army interrupted communication with the outside world this vital supply of cash was cut off. In 1947, therefore, the villagers were trying to spread out four months' food over the twelve months of the year.

Their diet was cornbread and little else. Nearly all of their sheep, whose milk had once helped to correct the deficiencies of a maize diet, had been slaughtered during the occupation; and the prevalence of skin diseases and a certain lassitude in their movements clearly indicated that malnutrition was added to undernourishment. They missed salt more acutely than anything else. There had been none in the village for several weeks when I was there.

Kotta remained in guerrilla hands until August 1949. It was luckier than some of its neighboring communities inasmuch as there was no fighting in the immediate environs, so that the houses of the village escaped without more than casual damage. But the villagers could not escape from famine, nor from disease that naturally followed in the wake of prolonged and drastic undernourishment. When I returned in 1956, the population of the village had shrunk to 188, less than one third of what it had been in 1947. The average number of persons per family had declined to 2.4, whereas in 1947 families with fewer than three children were a rarity and five or six children per family was closer to the average.

About one hundred of the former inhabitants of the village were simply missing. They had gone off, in desperation, looking for food or safety and had not come back. Most, presumably, had died or been killed. In addition, the village priest said that about fifty of the village men were known to have been killed while serving with the guerrillas; and five families had moved west across the Albanian frontier in 1949 when the guerrilla retreat took place. But the largest single factor in the decline of population was the removal of the village children by the guer-

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

families managed to escape official pressures and stayed in Volos, I was told, even though the records showed them back in the village. Similarly, a trickle of migration from the village into Volos since 1950 has gone unrecorded. With every sort of bureaucratic obstacle put in the way of legal transfer of residence from Cherasia to Volos, most of those who depart from the village simply neglect red tape and leave their names registered in Cherasia. They do so not by choice, since people officially registered as living in a village like Cherasia cannot claim unemployment benefits in Volos, and if they find no work, must either starve, rely upon relatives, or return to their village until better times offer a new start in town. This, of course, is the main reason why transfer of residence is made so difficult; the government could not afford to pay unemployment benefits to all the hungry men from the hills who might swarm into town if they could secure such payments.

Nevertheless, the villagers all agreed that more people were living in Cherasia in 1956 than had lived there before the war. A mean between conflicting estimates of the population came out close to 500 for 1956, and about 430 for 1940. The villagers reckon that their own local production supplies food for only two months in the year. The rest has to be bought with money earned by selling wood and charcoal, together with an occasional lamb from their flock.

Records of births and deaths were also in confusion, partly because children born in Volos to parents registered in Cherasia are supposed to be, but are not always in fact, entered in the village records. Partly, too, confusion arises from the custom of sending pregnant women to the Volos hospitals to give birth – a new departure in village custom, resulting from the wartime experience of living in the town, and facilitated by the existence of the new road. These children, too, sometimes escape the village registers, or are entered late. For what the figures may be

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Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

worth, however, the records showed 45 births since 1951 as against 18 deaths, and everything I heard and observed in the village pointed to a very high rate of natural increase.

Marriages occur early. When nearly everyone lacks land that is worth much of anything, there is no tendency to wait until the new family can be assured a landed inheritance. One young man said, somewhat cynically: "What I had when I married was a donkey, an axe and a strong back. I still have all three, and three children as well." The donkey, I gathered, was his wife's contribution to the new household; the axe and the back, his own. This, it seems, is more or less normal in the village; and one can easily understand how a desire to escape the nagging poverty of the parental household would lead young men and girls into early marriage, in order at least to enjoy personal independence and the satisfactions of the marriage bed. Even though the rest of their traditional style of life seems on the verge of ruin, this still is possible. Feeling a general despair of ever being able to live decently, feeling also a certain reckless defiance of all forms of authority – including parental authority – there seems to persons such as the young man who spoke to me no reason not to marry as soon as one can find a partner.

In spite of the rebellious mood prevailing in Cherasia, the officials of the village in 1956, although supposedly elected, represented the extreme right. The president and secretary were both members of the "rich" families, possessing comparatively broad acres, and both were very emphatic and voluble in asserting that the only way to deal with Communists was to use force. Indeed, they said that peace could come to Cherasia and to Greece only when Russia was blown up by American atom bombs. How they were elected, I do not know, but I am certain the election was not a free one. Suspicion and thinly veiled hostility dominated the relation between the villagers and their official leaders.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
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Kardamili

[Hill Villages]

animals; and before roads were built, these villages brought their surplus on donkey-back (or on the hoof) to Kardamili, where it was put on board a small ship, and carried either to Athens or to Kalamata, the local metropolis, some thirty-five miles away on the rich Messenian plain. In addition, an oil-pressing plant was constructed in 1929 in Kardamili which employed as many as a hundred persons at the height of the season. Even when there were no olives to press, the plant kept open the year around by making soap and other products.

This was the basis upon which about 750 people were able to make a living in the village before the war. In recent years, however, the village has not prospered. The oil factory closed down permanently in 1940, depriving the village of what had been one of its most important resources. After the war, a new road, built in 1949–50, destroyed the importance of the port. Instead of bringing their olives to Kardamili on donkey-back and selling them there, the peasants of the hinterland loaded their produce directly onto trucks bound for Kalamata or Athens.

The new system was an obvious improvement on older methods of transport and marketing; but it meant that Kardamili, which for a few years between the wars had struggled toward becoming a miniature town, was compelled to sink back to a purely village status. One manifestation of this change is a decrease in population. In 1940, the village had about 750 inhabitants; in 1956 the population totaled only 512. War losses were insignificant, although guerrillas did kill two persons from the village. The whole community was forcibly evacuated to Kalamata in 1949 to prevent its exploitation by guerrilla bands that ranged even this far south. The evacuation was perhaps scarcely justified, however, since the guerrillas never again came near, and when the villagers returned in 1950 they found their houses intact.